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ust, though reports were received, leaving little doubt as to its presence in the vicinity. Five specimens taken, July 5 and 6.

*Geological Survey, Ottawa, Canada, April 5, 1918.*

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**An Early or Late Nesting of Green-backed Goldfinch?**—On November 4, 1918, a neighbor called me over to inspect the nest of a Green-backed Goldfinch (*Astragalinus psaltria hesperophilus*) that he had found in his yard. The nest was in an apricot tree about eight feet up, and from which all the leaves had fallen. It contained two partially feathered young. The fact that autumn had bared the trees of their foliage made it look especially odd.—N. K. CARPENTER, *Escondido, California, November 14, 1918.*

**Grackles Nesting in Herons' Nests.**—On June 8, 1918, at Little Fish Lake, Moose Mountain District, Saskatchewan, on a wooded island, I found a colony of Great Blue Herons breeding. Under and in the sides of their large nests, which were about 25 feet from the ground, five or six pairs of the Bronzed Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula aeneus*) had built their nests, these latter containing young.—H. H. MITCHELL, *Provincial Museum, Regina, Saskatchewan, October 25, 1918.*

**Notes on the Black-bellied Plover and the Golden Plover.**—It seems to me highly probable that the Golden Plover (*Charadrius dominicus dominicus*) may be more numerous along the Pacific Coast than is generally supposed, and possibly the same may be said of the Atlantic Coast also. Without wishing to cast any slurs upon ornithologists in general, it is nevertheless a fact that even the experienced bird man must be strictly on the alert in order to detect a Golden among a flock of Black-bellies (*Squatarola squatarola*). The average hunter undoubtedly consigns them all to the pot as the same thing, when, if he were only told the difference, he would be likely to hand the rare one over to a bird student.

The somewhat smaller size of the Golden Plover, with its three front toes and no hind toe, instead of the three front toes plus a well defined hind toe in the Black-belly, are evident enough when the bird is in hand. However, these recognition marks are obviously useless when the birds are flying or running along the beach. I know of but one wholly satisfactory clew to the birds in life, which is the tail and the upper tail-coverts. The Black-bellied Plover shows an exceedingly prominent amount of white on these parts, while the Golden Plover shows none at all, with the exception of a few bars on the tail.

Another means of field identification are the jet black axillars, in all plumages, of the Black-belly in contrast with the pale feathers of the Golden. These can be seen, however, only when the birds have their wings raised and are broadside to the observer; but any bird that shows black on the under side of its wings is not a Golden Plover.

For the benefit of those who do not know, it may be of interest to say that both of these birds are without much doubt to be found along the Pacific Coast, to at least as far north as the state of Washington, at any time between August 15 and May 15. The Black-bellied Plover is a winter resident, beyond question, and the same would probably hold good with the Golden Plover (see CONDOR, XVIII, 1916, 31). Records of the Golden Plover along the Pacific Coast are so few that the estimate given above as to their probable time of occurrence must be taken as purely theoretical. However, my twenty-five years acquaintance with our North American shorebirds makes me fairly certain that the estimate is not greatly at variance with the actual facts, if these could be ascertained.

We have all undoubtedly posted our sportsmen friends to be on the lookout for a "Widgeon with a red head", which he must turn over to us without a feather missing. Having thus put a lookout for a male European Widgeon, let us also impress upon these same long-suffering friends the necessity of saving for us any Black-bellied Plover, also called "Beetle-head", that shows no white on its lower back and no black under the wing. It may not benefit you often, but it does sometimes.—J. HOOPER BOWLES, *Tacoma, Washington, October 15, 1918.*

**Notes on the Behavior of Pintail Ducks in a Hailstorm.**—On October 20, 1918, I was hunting ducks on the Rio Grande south of Las Lunas, New Mexico. I was sitting in my blind on a sandbar, with some dead ducks set out as decoys, when a very severe hailstorm set in. During the thick of the storm I discovered that a flock of about forty Pintail Ducks (*Dafila acuta*) had settled among my decoys not twenty yards distant. Each bird was facing toward the storm, and each had his head and bill pointed almost vertically into the air. The flock presented a very strange appearance, and I was puzzled for a moment as to the meaning of the unusual posture. Then it dawned on me what they were doing. In a normal position the hailstones would have hurt their sensitive bills, but pointed up vertically the bill presented a negligible surface from which hailstones would naturally be deflected. The correctness of this explanation was later proven by the fact that a normal position was resumed as soon as the hail changed into a slow rain.

Has any other observer ever noted a similar performance in this or other species of ducks, or in any other birds?—ALDO LEOPOLD, *Albuquerque, New Mexico, October 22, 1918.*

**Unusual Occurrences of Bendire Thrasher, Forked-tailed Petrel and Western Goshawk.**—In his *Distributional List of the Birds of California*, under Bendire Thrasher (*Toxostoma bendirei*) Dr. Grinnell says "no verification" of the Palm Springs record is now to be obtained. The specimen upon which this record was based is now no. 1507 in the collection of the San Diego Natural History Museum. It was taken April 8, 1885.

On December 23, 1918, as I was walking along the beach at Ocean Beach, California, looking among the drift marking the high tide line for dead fulmars, which occasionally wash ashore there, I found a Forked-tailed Petrel (*Oceanodroma furcata*). The place was within the city limits of San Diego. I believe this is the southernmost record for this species up to this time. The skin is no. 2031 of the Natural History Museum. As this was the first specimen of this species that I had handled I looked it up rather carefully. In reading Ridgway's description in his *Manual of North American Birds* I find that he divides the family into two subfamilies, *Procellariinae* with 13 secondaries, in which he places the genus *Oceanodroma*; and *Oceanitinae* with 10 secondaries. My *furcata* has but ten secondaries in each wing. The bird was in poor condition, but the flight feathers seem to be all there. Our *O. melania* and *O. socorroensis* appear to have 13 secondaries. Someone having the opportunity to examine fresh specimens of *furcata* should count the secondaries.

A Western Goshawk (*Astur atricapillus striatulus*) was shot by Rudolph Wueste at the Lower Otay Reservoir (about five miles north of the Lower California line) on November 9, 1916. It is now in the collection of the Natural History Museum of San Diego.—FRANK STEPHENS, *Natural History Museum, San Diego, California, January 13, 1919.*

**The Sandhill Crane in Northeastern California.**—On September 30, 1906, when studying the animals and plants in American Valley, not far from the town of Quincy, I was suddenly startled by the unmistakable rasping cry of a Sandhill Crane. It was loud and clear and came from the willow-bordered meadows near where I was standing, but the bird kept hidden by the tall bushes so that I was unable to actually see it. However, since there is no other bird whose note could possibly be mistaken for that of the Sandhill Crane, there can be no question as to the record. And as the date was too early for the arrival of migrants from the north, there is little room for doubt that the bird had bred on these meadows.

The absence of recent records in the splendid work on *The Game Birds of California*, by Grinnell, Bryant, and Storer, the latest being Henshaw's for 1878 and Townsend's for 1887, impels me to record the above note.

And while on the subject of Sandhill Cranes in California, it may be worth while to mention that on November 12, 1904, while witnessing an elk drive at Buttonwillow Ranch, at the southern end of San Joaquin Valley, I saw half a dozen Sandhill Cranes flying over. The people at the ranch told me that the Cranes would be common a little later, and that in the winter they were very destructive to sprouting grain.—C. HART MERRIAM, *Washington, D. C., January 29, 1919.*

**Notes from Colton, California.**—A set of eggs of the Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens cinerascens*) was collected near here in May, 1918. The nest was in a cavity in a dead stump and was twenty-two inches below the opening. While I was removing the nest material I was surprised to feel more eggs under the flycatcher's nest. These were eggs of the Red-shafted Flicker and all but one had holes in them. Possibly the flycatchers had driven the flickers out of the cavity, pecked holes in the fresh flicker eggs, and had then gone on with their nest building over the ruin.

May 7, 1918, I collected near here a nest of the Tree Swallow (*Iridoprocne bicolor*) containing three eggs of the swallow and one egg of the Western House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon parkmani*). The wren egg could not have been placed in the nest by a boy, as a section of the tree had to be removed before the nest could be examined. I observed the swallows taking feathers to the nest at least ten days before I collected the set. I did not see any wren near by.

A set of four eggs of the California Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica aestiva brewsteri*) was taken by me near San Bernardino on May 5, 1918. Elevation above sea level was about 1000 feet. I consider this a very early record for this species.—W. C. HANNA, *Colton, California, January 2, 1919.*

**The Red-billed Tropic-bird in California.**—A. W. Anthony, in 1889 (Proc. Calif. Acad. Sci., 2d ser., II, p. 86), predicted that *Phaethon aethereus* would be found to be "a rare visitant to the entire Pacific coast of the [Lower California] Peninsula," and Grinnell (Pac. Coast Avif., no. 11, 1915, p. 176), although relegating to the hypothetical list Bryant's record (Proc. Calif. Acad. Sci., loc. cit., footnote) for Marin County, California, based on a skull, expresses the belief that "the species . . . is likely to be observed sooner or later north of the Mexican boundary."

A specimen which proves to belong to this species was taken in the San Pedro Channel about midway between Long Beach, California, and Catalina Island, in August, 1916, by Captain W. H. Graves, who operates a small pleasure boat out of Long Beach.

When interviewed by the writer in September, 1916, Captain Graves stated that this bird or one like it had been observed on the last previous voyage—a day or two before the capture—and had sailed about over the boat; that, on the day of capture, the bird was again "picked up" near where it had been observed before, and was shot as it sailed overhead; and that he did not remember ever having seen another in the several years he had operated in the channel.

The bird had already been mounted by G. W. Stowe, a taxidermist of Long Beach, who had no further data, and it was later placed on exhibit in a glass case directly in front of a south window at the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce, by an anonymous friend to whom Captain Graves had presented it. Persistent effort to procure the specimen for scientific preservation failed.

Descriptive notes taken by the writer directly from the specimen in September, 1916, were substantially as follows. The plumage was mainly white, which predominated on the back in the proportion of two or three to one. The occiput was mottled with black, which there predominated. A narrow black band curving up from the gape extended through the eye and backward. Black barring extended from the occiput all over the back. The scapulars were black with white edges, as were also the coverts except on the shoulder. The primaries were black, with the inner webs of some, at least, white edged. The exposed secondaries were white. The rectrices were white with quills black, except in the extended shafts—eight or nine inches longer than the others—in which the quills were white. The under tail coverts were mottled with black. There was a creamy sheen to the uninterrupted white areas, without suggestion of pink. The taxidermist had painted the bill an orange red with yellowish tip, the tarsi an olive yellow, and the feet blackish, and had used eyes with orange irises.

The specimen thus apparently is in normal adult plumage, and is quite like a large series of the Red-billed Tropic-bird in the California Academy of Sciences collection from the Galapagos Islands. A single specimen of the Yellow-billed Tropic-bird in the same collection was also examined.—J. EUGENE LAW, *Los Angeles, California, February 10, 1919.*